

Advent Reflection  
December 17, 2020  
*JOY*

**Matthew 2: 1-12 NRSV**

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*Reflection by Cindy W.*

From a sermon by Rev. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas:

"What a beautiful line that is — "when they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy." The long, long journey with all its uncertainties and privations, its cold nights and its restless, ardent searching, has reached its fulfillment. The star has stopped, and the wise men can be at peace at last, they have arrived at last, they have found what they were looking for, at last! They enter the house, they see Mary and the child, and they fall to their knees in a gesture of deep reverence and humility....Do we know what that's like? Of course we do. We glimpse such moments whenever time seems to stop, when, for instance, our minds grow very quiet in prayer,...Or...when we gaze at something that captures our complete attention — maybe a stretch of mountains or the sea, or when we take a long, loving look into a child's sleeping face... In moments like these, Love is pouring through us and into us, and all we can do is throw up our hands, fall inwardly to our knees, and offer as a gift everything that is in us, just as the wise men open their treasure chests and offer everything that is in them."

May each of us find the joy of the Magi around us and within us during this season and throughout the year. Amen.